

Appendix B

Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity

The Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) administers legislation that ensures equal access to private housing markets and HUD-funded programs. The information in this Appendix has been prepared in accordance with the mandates of Sections 808 (e)(2) and 808 (e)(6) of the Fair Housing Act and Section 561(j) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1987, as amended. Section 808(e)(2) of the FHAct directs the Secretary to report on the “nature and extent of progress made nationally in eliminating discriminatory housing practices and furthering the purposes of this title.”

This Appendix responds to that charge and includes the following:

- Appendix B.1 - *The State of Fair Housing*
- Appendix B.2 - Enforcing Fair Housing Laws
- Appendix B.3 - Fair Housing Initiatives Program
- Appendix B.4 - Ensuring Fair Housing in HUD Programs

Appendix B.1 - The State of Fair Housing

This section identifies the Department's current fair housing priorities, fair housing research in the Office of Policy Development and Research, and the Secretary's 1997 fair housing initiatives and other program accomplishments.

A. Overview

Fair housing is the cornerstone of our nation's historic push to create an America where opportunity and success are within the reach of all citizens and where no one is denied an opportunity to build a better life because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, family status or disability. For almost 30 years, promoting fair housing has been a core function of the Department. The passage of the 1988 Fair Housing Amendments Act strengthened the Federal fair housing law, giving the Department additional tools and far-reaching enforcement powers to combat housing discrimination. This Appendix specifically reports the progress that the Department made in FY 1997 in enforcing the provisions of the Fair Housing Act in addition to other federal statutes which prohibit discrimination in housing.

The Department's fair housing priorities are:

- Increasing the number of enforcement actions taken so that minority families and individuals can live in neighborhoods of their choice;
- Promoting reinvestment in minority neighborhoods so that they represent a real choice for families of all races;
- Ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to a full range of housing choices through strong enforcement of fair housing laws; and
- Developing accessible housing in both the private and public housing market.

Within the Department, the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) has the primary responsibility for carrying out and addressing these priorities. FHEO advises the Secretary on policies and issues affecting fair housing, economic development opportunities, and other matters impacting minorities, families with children, persons with disabilities, and civil rights organizations.

Looking forward from FY 1997, the Community Builders will play a pivotal part in the Department's battle against housing discrimination. These Builders serve on the front lines in communities and neighborhoods across America as the Secretary's liaison with advocacy organizations, elected officials, businesses, and everyday citizens. In this capacity, they will monitor fair housing issues in their communities and neighborhoods, and refer instances of possible discrimination to the Department for investigation.

